



## Profiles in Conservation

### *The Asais*

# Oregon's Conservation Showcase



**T**o Sam and Aron Asai, Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) is more than just another Farm Bill program. As third and fourth generation Hood River apple, pear, and cherry growers, this father-son management team sees CTA as a management tool that will help increase production efficiency, reduce water use, and strengthen their business' bottom line.

"We all have to make a profit to stay in this business," Sam said, "and CTA can help us make more efficient use of our resources — including our financial resources."

After evaluating their operation with CTA, the Asais plan to use the EQIP program to convert to more efficient irrigation methods, which they believe will not only result in healthier trees and increased production, but also in reduced labor costs.

"In a drought situation like we had last year, I can get across my entire orchard in two days if I have to," Aron said. "It's a lot quicker to turn on two or three lines every three hours than it is to move a hand line every three hours. It takes an hour to just move a hand line one row," he said.



The Asais understand the importance of healthy orchards and healthy businesses. As an active member of the conservation community, Sam said he encourages his neighbors to consider using conservation programs to protect the area's resources and to bolster family farm income. "We're all struggling in agriculture, and any little bit helps to maintain our family farms," he said.

Aron's farmer-to-farmer advice is similar to his dad's: "I'd tell other farmers to get involved in a conservation program. You do nothing wrong with trying it. If you don't like it, then you just don't do it again."

In the end, the Asais believe CTA and the EQIP program will increase the viability of their business. "In short," Aron said, "EQIP will provide us with a way to do the things that we have outlined in our conservation plan."

#### **Location:**

Hood River, Oregon

#### **Operation:**

Cherry, Apple, Pear Orchards

**Acres:** 84

**Conservation plan since:**

2001